

The Honorable Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am a current subscriber to DirectTV. I applaud the rejection of the merger between EchoStar and Hughes. Please do not allow their continuing attempts to merge be successful.

Recently I received a letter from DirectTV stating that they had the highest customer service rating of all cable and satellite TV providers. If they are the best then the others must be unbelievably bad.

Allowing EchoStar and Hughes to merge will bring a virtual monopoly into being. The service will not improve.

On October 4, 2002 my Tivo satellite receiver crashed. The Tivo receiver is a combination receiver and digital recorder. It records directly to a computer hard drive. My receiver is a Sony SAT-T60 with 35 hours of recording capacity.

I have a service contract with DirectTV for all my satellite equipment including cables, switches, dishes and receivers including the Tivo. When my Tivo crashed, it would not even start up, I called DirectTV.

After I described the problem the service rep put me on hold. After a few minutes he came back and told me that the only possible explanation for the problem was that I had opened the receiver and tampered with it. Since I had tampered with it, it was no longer covered by warranty. He phrased a question like, 'Did the receiver fail when you opened the unit and tampered with the hard drive?'. Along the lines of 'Exactly when did you stop beating your wife?'.

I asked for and talked with a supervisor. The supervisor did apologize for the rep's accusations and agreed to look into the matter. Finally several hours later she agreed that the repair would be covered. A box was sent to me. I sent the unit in for repair.

On November 1st I received the unit back. I hooked it up. During setup I noticed on the system information screen that the recording capacity of the unit was no longer 35 hours. It was now only 25 hours. The hard drive had been replaced with one smaller than manufacturer's specifications.

I began calling DirectTV. I talked with rep after rep until they would forward me to 'please hang up and try your call again'. No one had a clue what to do. Finally after 45 minutes on the phone and three calls to DirectTV I insisted on talking with a supervisor. Finally the third supervisor I talked to appeared to be able to do something. She told me that she would investigate the matter and get back with me the next day.

I personally do not see what investigation should be required. Their repair was not up to manufacturer's specifications and must be corrected.

The next day, November 2, no phone call was forthcoming from DirectTV. Finally at about 4pm I called them. All they could tell me was that the matter was being investigated and they would call be back.

On Wednesday, November 3, I called them again in the afternoon as they had not called me back. The rep again repeated the line that a supervisor was investigating it and would call me back. I insisted on talking with a supervisor.

When the supervisor came on the line I mentioned the JD Powers customer service rating, and that they could not prove it by me. At this the supervisor became somewhat heated and stated that I guess we just need to send you a box and get that unit back in here. I could not tell if she was raising her voice in response to me, or if she was just disgusted that it had been dragged out so long on her side.

Finally on Saturday the 9th a box did arrive and I have sent the unit in for repair once again.

My questions are about why an undersized hard drive was put in my repaired unit.

Did the service rep not have a properly sized unit on hand and decided to replace it with a smaller one that was available in order to meet his quota and turn the unit around quickly? If so did a supervisor approve it? Was it properly documented or was the documentation falsified to show a proper repair?

Was theft involved? Did the service rep see an opportunity to steal a large hard drive

Sincerely,

Chris Havelick
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